
TRUE PRINCIPLES

OF THE

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



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A

BRIEF EXPOSITION AND VINDICATION

OF

SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT OF THE ORIGINAL
DOCTRINES, PRINCIPLES, AND PRACTICES
OF THE RELIGIOUS

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

BY

CHARLES PERRY.

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At a Meeting for Sufferings, held at Pawtucket, Rhode Island, on the 5th day of the Eighth Month, 1885,

The reading of a manuscript entitled "A Brief Exposition and Vindication of some of the most Important of the Original Doctrines, Principles, and Practices of the Religious Society of Friends," by Charles Perry, which was commenced at our sitting on the 13th of the Sixth Month last, was now concluded to our satisfaction, and he is left at liberty to publish the same, with the approval of this meeting.

Taken from the minutes.

THOMAS PERRY, *Clerk.*

INTRODUCTION.

BY way of introduction to the following pages it may be said that Robert Barclay, of Ury, Scotland, about the year 1675, published that most able and thorough explanation and vindication of the principles and doctrines of the Religious Society of Friends, "An Apology for the True Christian Divinity," which is most admirably adapted to its noble purpose, and remains to be the standard authority for which it was designed.

This work, which is acknowledged by all sound Friends to be conclusive and unanswerable, has from that early day stood before the Christian world without any successful controversy or opposition. But it is somewhat extensive and full, and for this reason is not so generally read and considered as it otherwise would be. And although this effort of mine at a brief explanation and defense of some of the most important of our principles and practices was at first thought of only as a record of my conviction of their soundness and vital consequence, to be left in manuscript with my children and some of my near family relatives, yet since I have been engaged upon it I

have felt that it might be more useful should its circulation be further extended; perhaps for the very reason of its brevity.

That portion of it which treats of the Discipline, and the action of the Society under it, is given more specially and in detail than would else be needful, for the benefit of such as may chance to meet with it who have not other ready means of information respecting the Society, its principles and usages.

CHARLES PERRY.

WESTERLY, R. I., *Second Month*, 1885.

A BRIEF EXPOSITION

OF

IMPORTANT DOCTRINES OF FRIENDS.

FOR a considerable time past I have felt that it might be my duty, before I go hence to be seen of men no more, to leave some record of the high estimation in which I hold the true principles of the Religious Society of Friends (commonly called Quakers), which of late years have been sadly departed from by many whose place it should have been to maintain and uphold them before the world in their purity. And now, in the seventy-fifth year of my age, for the benefit of survivors and those who may come after me, I will endeavor (however unworthy I feel myself to be rightly to perform such a task) to set forth the ground of my assured conviction of the truth and divine origin of these essential doctrines.

First, I believe that George Fox was divinely inspired to preach the gospel, and to hold forth to the world a bright example of the excellency of Christianity. His teaching differed so far, and was so much in advance, from the degenerate condition of the professing church of his day, and so clearly made manifest this difference to be of practical and essential importance, that it excited the ill-feelings and pas-

sions of many high professors, and called forth much obloquy and persecution upon George Fox and those early worthies who were convinced of the truth of his teachings, and in the honest integrity of their souls faithfully endeavored to live in accordance with them.

It is remarkable that so many of these staunch supporters of the truth were raised up to bear their testimony to its inestimable worth, and who chose rather to suffer the reproaches and persecutions of men than to give up or deny the blessed principles of the gospel of Christ, which they had espoused, and which fully corresponded with the sensible and immediate operations of the Holy Spirit upon their own hearts.

The first great principle and fundamental truth of the doctrines taught by George Fox was that the direct operation of the Holy Spirit is vouchsafed to all, as a living Guide and Teacher, to be felt and known by all those who would heed it and endeavor to follow its leadings. This doctrine is, I think, more fully and clearly testified of in the holy Scriptures than almost any other in the whole range of Christian belief. It seems most fitting that it should be so, inasmuch as it is the foundation on which all the others rest, — the root from which all the various branches abiding therein receive nourishment and strength.

Very strange does it appear that this most essential doctrine and ground-work of true vital religion, — that of *Immediate Divine Revelation*, — with such an abundance of Scripture testimony to sustain it, could have been called in question, doubted, or denied, by such as not only admit, but urge and plead for, the divine authority and binding obligation of the Scriptures. Yet so it was, and the early Friends suffered at the hand and instigation of such professors ex-

treme persecutions, imprisonments, and tortures,—some even unto death,—for the honest profession and faithful maintenance of their belief in this plain Scripture doctrine, and of being guided thereby. We of this generation, perhaps, little know or realize how much we owe to these staunch supporters of the truth for the freedom of conscience which we now enjoy. But for their faithful endurance we might even now be groping in the darkness of intolerance and superstition. Much of the progress which has been made in the world, in the prevalence of greater toleration of religious views and beliefs,—the greater freedom both intellectual and physical,—as well as many other advances of the most desirable nature, is undoubtedly to be attributed to the good influence exerted by these people, through holy help, in faithfully publishing their Christian principles, and adhering to them, through evil report and good report.

I propose to quote from the Scriptures some passages which can be no otherwise construed than as a plain and direct testimony to the truth of the great doctrine here referred to ; and then to show that other of the distinguishing principles and practices of Friends, the legitimate outgrowth and result of this leading primal truth, are also fully sustained by clear Scripture testimony.

First, in regard to the sensible operation of the Holy Spirit upon the mind of man, enlightening his conscience, and, as it is heeded, directing his way, and leading him in the path of righteousness and safety. We find that Moses, under the dispensation to the Jews, after citing them to divers commandments besides those delivered on Mount Horeb, and setting forth the sad penalties of disobedience, promises them great good on this condition, namely : —

“If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.” — DEUT. xxx. 10–14.

From the song of Moses I quote as follows: —

“Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: Because I will publish the name of the Lord: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.” — DEUT. xxxii. 1–4.

“But there is a spirit in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.” — JOB xxxii. 8.

“Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy: at thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore.” — PSALMS xvi. 11.

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” — PSALMS xxiii. 1–4.

“Good and upright is the Lord; therefore will he teach sinners in the way. The meek will he guide in judgment; and the meek will he teach his way.” — PSALMS xxv. 8, 9.

“The Lord is my light and my salvation ; whom shall I fear ? the Lord is the strength of my life ; of whom shall I be afraid ? ” — PSALMS xxvii. 1.

“Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.” — PSALMS xxvii. 11.

“I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way thou shalt go : I will guide thee with mine eye.” — PSALMS xxxii. 8.

“Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward ; they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee : if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered. Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire ; mine ears hast thou opened : burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come : in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God : yea, thy law is within my heart.” — PSALMS xl. 5-8.

“Cast me not away from thy presence : and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation ; and uphold me with thy free Spirit.” — PSALMS li. 11, 12.

“Turn you at my reproof : behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.” — PROV. i. 23.

The coming of the Saviour, and the introduction of the New and Gospel Dispensation, is prophesied of as follows : —

“Behold my servant, whom I uphold : mine elect in whom my soul delighteth : I have put my Spirit upon him ; and he shall bring judgment to the Gentiles. . . . A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench : he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. . . . Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out ; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it ; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it ; and spirit to them that walk therein. I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine

hand, and will keep thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles." — *ISAIAH* xlii. 1, 3, 5, 6.

"I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." — *ISAIAH* xlix. 6.

And in the New Testament, under this Gospel Dispensation, we find as follows: —

"I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." — *MATT.* xi. 25–30.

"He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." — *MATT.* xvi. 15–17.

The solemn act of prayer clearly implies the leading and teaching of the Holy Spirit. Witness the following; as also *Romans* viii. 26, quoted in its order: —

"I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a

scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" — LUKE xi. 9-13.

"And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation.¹ Neither shall they say, Lo here! or lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." — LUKE xvii. 20, 21.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." — JOHN i. 1-5.

"It is the Spirit that quickeneth; ² the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." — JOHN vi. 63.

"I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." — JOHN viii. 12.

"If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever. Even the Spirit of Truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him: for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." — JOHN xiv. 15-18.

"If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. . . . But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." — JOHN xiv. 23, 26.

¹ Or, as in the marginal note, "with outward show."

² Or, giveth life.

“Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants ; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth : but I have called you friends ; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.” — JOHN xv. 14, 15.

“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.” — JOHN xvi. 12, 13.

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” — ROM. viii. 9.

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” — ROM. viii. 14.

“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities : for we know not what we should pray for as we ought : but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” — ROM. viii. 26.

“The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart : that is, the word of faith, which we preach.” — ROM. x. 8.

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you ? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy ; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.” — 1 COR. iii. 16, 17 ; vi. 19, 20.

“There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.” — 1 COR. xii. 6, 7.

“Ye are the temple of the living God ; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them ; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” — 2 COR. vi. 16.

“Christ in you, the hope of glory.” — COL. i. 27.

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world ; looking for that blessed hope, and

the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." — TITUS ii. 11-14.

"If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy *are ye*; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you. On their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified." — 1 PET. iv. 14.

"Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." — 1 JOHN iv. 15.

"But the anointing which ye have received of [the Father] abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie." — 1 JOHN ii. 27.

"And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us." — 1 JOHN iii. 24.

"If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love: and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." — 1 JOHN iv. 12-16.

What an amount is here of plain Scripture testimony, corresponding one part with another, and all, with the whole scope and tenor of the Scripture, in proof of this vital, life-giving principle of true religion; the in-speaking Word of the Holy Ghost, to the mind of man; the engrafted Word, which, if received and obeyed with meekness and in faith, is able to save the soul!

We are all aware that among the attributes universally ascribed to our Heavenly Father are these, —

Omniscience and Omnipresence; but do we as fully realize the extent of the meaning of these terms as we should?

Since the foregoing pages have been prepared, the following lines have fallen under my notice, which I have thought it might be well to add, in this place, by way of parable:—

WHERE IS GOD?

“ Oh, where is the sea ? ” the fishes cried,
As they swam the crystal clearness through.
“ We’ve heard from of old of the ocean’s tide,
And we long to look on the waters blue.
The wise ones speak of the infinite sea;
Oh, who can tell us if such there be ? ”

The lark flew up in the morning bright,
And sang and balanced on sunny wings ;
And this was its song : “ I see the light,
I look o’er a world of beautiful things ;
But flying and singing everywhere,
In vain I have searched to find the air.”

May it not sometimes be so with us,—that we may not realize where to look for Him “ in whom we live, and move, and have our being ” ?

Friends, in common with other Christian denominations, hold that all mankind are depraved and degenerated from their first estate, through the fall of Adam; and that in this condition they are subject to the power of Satan, and to be drawn into his wiles; and that man of himself could find no remedy for this state of darkness and blight, but that God of his infinite love has opened a door of escape and redemption in giving his only Son, a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, “ that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

We believe this because the Scriptures teach it, and because the Spirit in our own hearts teaches us, also, that without a Mediator we should be undone. The divinity of Christ is likewise fully and clearly proved by the purity and perfection of his life and teachings. It is plain to us (as it was to those who were present and heard his voice) that He spake as never man spake. So that I do not feel it needful to say more in this regard, but turn to a few of those distinguishing principles and practices peculiar to Friends which I early referred to, and show that these are also sustained by ample testimony of Scripture.

I will quote the concise words of Robert Barclay as evidence of the estimation in which we hold the Scriptures, and as a clear exposition of our views regarding them.

In his third proposition, the first and second having been devoted to the "True Foundation of Knowledge" and to the subject of "Immediate Revelation," he says: —

"From these revelations of the Spirit of God to the saints have proceeded the Scriptures of Truth, which contain, —

"First. A faithful historical account of the actings of God's people in divers ages; with many singular and remarkable providences attending them.

"Second. A prophetic account of several things, whereof some are already past, and some are yet to come.

"Third. A full and ample account of all the chief principles of the doctrine of Christ held forth in divers precious declarations, exhortations, and sentences, which by the moving of God's Spirit were at several times, and upon sundry occasions, spoken and written unto some churches and their pastors.

"Nevertheless, because they are only a declaration of the Fountain, and not the Fountain itself, therefore they are

not to be esteemed the principal ground of all truth and knowledge, nor yet the adequate primary rule of faith and manners. Nevertheless, as that which giveth a true and faithful testimony of the first foundation, they are and may be esteemed a secondary rule, subordinate to the Spirit, from which they have all their excellency and certainty: for as by the inward testimony of the Spirit we do alone truly know them, so they testify that the Spirit is that Guide by which the saints are led into all truth; therefore, according to the Scriptures, the Spirit is the first and principal leader."

On the subject of the ministry, Friends hold that a true gospel ministry is not to be acquired as any other trade or calling, by a mere effort of the intellectual powers of the natural man, to be exercised as a profession by which to obtain a livelihood; but that it is a gift bestowed by the Divine Father upon whomsoever He will (often upon the humble instrument, to his own admiration and wonder), for the reproof of the guilty ones, the help and restoration of such as may have gone astray; for the encouragement of the desponding, and the edification of such as are seeking for help; and so contributing to build up the Church of Christ. But only such as are thus divinely called and instructed can be properly exercised in the ministry. According to the commandment of Christ to the Apostles whom he had chosen, and —

"To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God; and being assembled together with *them* commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saieth he*, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." — ACTS i. 3-5.

As was also the testimony of the Apostle Paul to the Galatians, 1st chapter, 11th and 12th verses, as follows:—

“I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

And to the Corinthians he says:—

“For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel.” — 1 Cor. ix. 16.

We believe that all right qualification to preach the gospel must come from the same divine source which supplied the Apostles, and that a renewal of this qualification is needful to its proper exercise on each recurring occasion.

Paul says:—

“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.” — 2 Cor. iii. 5, 6.

The Apostle Peter, after his remarkable vision of the sheet let down from heaven, said of his preaching:—

“And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning; then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized you with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.” — Acts xi. 15, 16.

In his first general epistle Peter also says:—

“If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God; if any man minister, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through-

Jesus Christ ; to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever."— 1 PET. iv. 11.

The ministration of the gospel is to be free, like this : —

"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly ; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind."— 1 PET. v. 2.

As the Saviour enjoined upon his Apostles when He sent them forth : —

"Freely ye have received, freely give."— MATT. x. 8.

We hold that the gift of the ministry is not confined to one sex, but that women, as well as men, are sometimes called to preach the gospel ; according to the language of the prophet Joel, chapter ii. verses 28, 29, which is also quoted by Peter, as follows : —

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh ; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy : . . . And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit ; and they shall prophesy."— ACTS ii. 17, 18.

On Paul's journey from Greece to Jerusalem, they that were of his company

"Came unto Cæsarea, and entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, . . . and abode with him. And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy."— ACTS xxi. 8, 9.

Friends also hold that true worship does not consist in any round of ceremonies, or performances, but that as the Saviour taught the woman of Samaria, at Jacob's well, —

"The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth : for the

Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit : and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth." — JOHN iv. 23, 24.

Words are not necessary, but true and acceptable worship consists in an humble prostration of soul before the Lord Almighty ; many times in the silence of all flesh. Meetings are profitable, and should be held with regularity and promptness, in the fear of the Lord, which is so many times enjoined in the Scriptures ; but that many should be gathered, though desirable, and often helpful one to another, is not needful, for the Saviour also said : —

"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." — MATT. xviii. 20.

No buildings that man can erect, however tall and magnificent they may be, can be essential to the rightful worship of the Almighty Father, but, —

"The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart ; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." — PSALMS xxxiv. 18.

Even Solomon, at the dedication of the temple at Jerusalem, with all the pomp and splendor attending it, was led to ask, —

"But will God indeed dwell on the earth ? Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee ; how much less this house that I have builded ?" — 1 KINGS viii. 27.

We hold that nothing can be more fitting to the solemn purpose of divine worship than to meet in the silence of all flesh, and in the sincerity of our souls to prostrate ourselves before the Holy One, the Creator of all things and endeavor to worship Him really in spirit and in truth ; seeking that He may become

"The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in." — ISA. lviii. 12.

"Keep silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew their strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment." — ISA. xli. 1.

In regard to the practice of outward ordinances, Paul asks of the Colossians: —

"Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?" — COL. ii. 20-22.

Friends hold that the true Christian baptism is spiritual, — that of the Holy Ghost, not of water, which was but the symbol, or the shadow, of the gospel dispensation, of which John was the messenger, the forerunner; who said of himself: —

"I am not the Christ. . . . I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord. . . . And they asked him, Why baptizest thou then? . . . John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not: He it is, who coming after me, is preferred before me; whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose." — JOHN i. 20, 23, 25-27.

Matthew also says of him: —

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." — MATT. iii. 1-3.

And further Matthew testifies that he said of himself: —

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance : but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear ; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and *with* fire." — MATT. iii. 11.

As also John :—

"Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. . . . He must increase, but I *must* decrease." — JOHN iii. 28, 30.

And the Apostle Peter, speaking of the ark, wherein few, that is eight souls, were saved by water, says :—

"The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." — 1 PET. iii. 21.

And Paul to the Ephesians :—

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love ; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. *There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling ; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all." — EPH. iv. 1-6.

We hold that the Communion which is enjoined in the Scriptures is a spiritual union and communion of the Holy Ghost with our spirits, through the inshining of the Light of Christ, the blessed influence of which is known and felt to prevail with us at some times and seasons more fully and sensibly than at others ; and if humbly and rightly partaken of, will nourish up our souls to a higher degree of faith and reliance upon the goodness and grace of our

blessed Saviour and the Holy Father, who is thus mercifully preparing and fitting us for an inheritance in his heavenly kingdom. I suppose very few would claim that there is any virtue in the outward bread and wine, which are partaken of as a figure or symbol of this real communion, except it is accompanied with the true spiritual unction, which alone can be of value. The Saviour says:—

“Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. . . . Many of his disciples, when they heard *this*, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? . . . It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit and *they* are life.” — JOHN vi. 54–63.

This is a full and clear explanation by the Saviour himself of the inward and spiritual nature of communion, corresponding to the sensible operation of the Holy Spirit on the heart of man.

Paul the Apostle, in concluding his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, says:—

“All the saints salute you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen.”

Friends hold that all wars and fightings are unlawful and in violation of the Christian faith; that the Saviour was in *reality* the “Prince of Peace,” his birth being ushered in by a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, “Glory to God

in the highest, and on earth, peace and good will toward men ; ” that his mission was truly what it was thus called, that of peace and good will to men ; and that the whole tenor of his teaching was to this effect. For although he said to his disciples (Matt. x. 34), “ Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword,” yet this was not to indicate that the nature of his pure religion was to encourage or sanction violence or force, — by no means ; but it was prophetic of what was to come upon them from the opposition to be raised against them from without, on account of the purity and innocency of their lives. He had already said to them, in the same wonderful discourse, contained in this chapter, which comprised the instructions to his Apostles on sending them forth : —

“ Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves : be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men : for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues ; and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak : for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.”

In the Sermon on the Mount is found the following : —

“ Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth : But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil : but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.” — MATT. v. 38, 39.

“ I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.” — MATT. v. 44.

And we find the Saviour instructing Peter as follows : —

“ Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him ? — till seven times ? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee until seven times ; but, until seventy times seven.” — *MATT. xviii. 21, 22.*

And when brought before Pilate, he said : —

“ My kingdom is not of this world : if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight.” — *JOHN xviii. 36.*

And thus the day shall be ushered in, which was foretold by the prophet of old ; that the Lord

“ Shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people ; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks ; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” — *ISA. ii. 4.*

“ From whence come wars and fightings among you ? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members ? ” — *JAMES iv. 1.*

We cannot therefore take part in wars of any sort, neither offensive nor defensive, or for the maintaining of our rights ; but rather, in accordance with the plain teachings of our holy religion, submit to violence and wrong, — trusting that a sense of right and justice may prevail with those who can control, as we have sometimes gratefully realized, but in any case, to decline participation in the carnage of war.

We hold that all oaths are strictly and positively forbidden by the Saviour and by the Apostle James, in the following terms : —

“ Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time,

Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths; But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great king. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." — MATT. v. 33-37.

"But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath; but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation." — JAMES v. 12.

We can therefore only make the simple affirmation of yea and nay, so plainly enjoined; and this we are willing to do, under pain of any penalty which the courts, or those having jurisdiction over us, may for their own satisfaction choose to prescribe.

Friends who are faithful to their principles are marked by a peculiar plainness and sobriety in their conduct and personal appearance, embracing their manner of dress and address, which to some, who take but a slight and partial view of it, may seem to be a needless and uncalled-for singularity. It may even be ascribed to a desire for making a display of oddity, which is far from true. It is indeed in the way of the cross, so to differ from the world around them. Often have they been reproached and scoffed at for its practice.

A fair and candid examination of the grounds on which these traits are founded will plainly show that there is good reason for them, and that they are maintained as a testimony, required at our hands, to the truth and to Christian purity and simplicity.

In regard to dress it may be said that the Friends did not adopt a new fashion, but continued to use

that which prevailed in England at the time they appeared, feeling it to be required of them, by refusing a compliance with the ever-changing fashions, to bear a faithful protest against the folly and vanity of the world. Any real improvement or advantage they have been ready to adopt, but not to make a change merely because it becomes fashionable, without regard to the essential requisites of comfort or convenience ; and as such things are often done at much inconvenience, as well as needless cost, and all to gratify the pride and vanity of the human heart.

Peter, in his first general epistle, speaking of the wives of those he was addressing, uses this language : —

“ Whose adorning, let it not be that outward *adorning* of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel, but *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, *even the ornament* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.” — 1 PET. iii. 3, 4.

The plain language of “thee and thou” to a single person instead of the plural, as it almost universally prevails in the world, is used by Friends, because it only is correct and true ; the corruption having been introduced first to gratify the pride and vanity of those holding royal stations, and afterwards fallen into by others on the like account, as was also the practice of bowing and uncovering the head as an act of reverence in any human presence. The plain “thee and thou” is the uniform language of the Scriptures, not only when applied to finite beings, but also when speaking of or addressing the infinite Father of all. And this language is still used by all of every class, in their prayers to Him. To do otherwise would be looked upon as no less than sac-

rilege; yet when we look at the origin of this improper, corrupted mode of expression, how strange and absurd does it appear that we mortals should use it when addressing each other!

There was no good or sufficient reason for the change; — but that which was given for it when it was introduced into the world, was very much worse than none; so that Friends who are faithful to use the original pure Scriptural language need no excuse or apology, but are to be commended for so doing. If all would ever be consistent in this respect, there is no doubt it would be a great strength and support to them, in the proper maintenance of the true Christian character in other most essential and important ways, to the comfort and consolation of their souls.

The improper origin of the names of some of the months of the year and of all the days of the week, as now commonly used, is here given. I quote from our Discipline: —

I. January was so called from Janus, an ancient king of Italy, whom heathenish superstition had deified, to whom a temple was built and this month dedicated.

II. February was so called from Februa, a word denoting *purgation by sacrifices*; it being usual in this month for the priests of the heathen god Pan to offer sacrifices and perform certain rites, conducing, as was supposed, to the cleansing or purgation of the people.

III. March was so named from Mars, feigned to be the god of war, who Romulus, founder of the Roman Empire, pretended was his father.

IV. April is generally supposed to derive its name from the Greek appellation of Venus, an imaginary goddess worshipped by the Romans.

V. May is said to be so called from Maia, the mother of

Mercury, another of their pretended deities, to whom in this month they paid their devotions.

VI. June is said to take its name from Juno, one of the supposed goddesses of the heathen.

VII. July, so called from Julius Cæsar, one of the Roman emperors, who gave his own name to this month, which before was called Quintilis, or the fifth.

VIII. August was so named in honor of Augustus Cæsar, another of the Roman emperors. This month was before called Sextilis, or the sixth.

The other four months, namely, September, October, November, and December, still retain their numerical Latin names, which, according to the present regulation of the calendar, are improperly applied. From the continued use of them, however, as well as from the ancient practice of the Jews, the numerical order only was undoubtedly the most ancient, as it is the most plain, simple, and rational mode of designating them.

Each of the days of the week was called by our Saxon ancestors by the name of the idol they especially worshiped on that day. Hence the first day of the week was called Sunday, from their usual adoration of the sun on that day. The second of the week they called Monday, from their worship of the moon on that day. The third they named Tuesday, in honor of one of their gods called Tuisco. The fourth day of the week they called Wednesday, from Woden, another of their idols. The fifth was called Thursday, from another idol, called Thor. The sixth was termed Friday, from an imaginary goddess they worshiped. The seventh and last day of the week they styled Saturday, probably from Saturn or Seater, by them worshiped.

We think it right and best, therefore, for us to practice the plain mode of calling the days and months simply by their numbers, undefiled by heathenish corruptions.

DISCIPLINE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH.

The Society of Friends early established a Discipline or system of church government of a very efficient and wholesome character, admirably fitted to sustain the advanced ground it had taken, and when rightly exercised in keeping with its true Christian spirit and principles it is believed to be in a remarkable degree promotive of the best and most desirable ends which can engage the human mind. Its essential basis is that great and leading principle of the Society which I at first so fully set forth, and supported by quotations from Scripture, namely, the immediate revelation of the Holy Spirit to the mind of man, as his Guide and Leader, when rightly heeded and followed, in all that concerns his spiritual and everlasting welfare.

This divine presence is to be looked for, desired, and sought after in all our meetings, both for worship and discipline; and when vouchsafed to us, as it sometimes has been, has produced notable results for good, and the manifest advancement and progress of right ways and practices among us.

The Preparative Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, for the transaction of the business affairs of the Society, are held in subordination to each other, in the order named, and all subordinate to the Yearly Meeting; reports being forwarded and representatives attending, from the lower to the higher meetings.

Queries are provided in the Discipline relative to the condition and standing of each subordinate meeting, touching many most essential and important matters, which are to be carefully answered and reported to the higher meetings. This practice is admirably adapted to the purpose of giving the true state of the meetings; the answers being subject to

the judgment and supervision of all the members who feel called to assist in preparing them. Meetings for discipline are held by the men and women Friends, each by itself; each meeting attending to the business pertaining to itself, and referring its action on subjects essentially affecting the welfare of the Society to the meeting of the opposite sex, for its judgment and unity thereon; which being reached is returned, with word to that effect, to the meeting whence it came. The queries contain intimations of needed guard against faults or short-comings, and a practical observance of the virtues of a truly Christian life and conversation in our daily walk. The subjects inquired about are as in the following abstract: —

1st. As to the attendance of meetings, and proper behavior therein.

2d. Whether love and unity are maintained, detraction guarded against; and where differences arise, whether endeavors are used speedily to end them.

3d. Is plainness taught and practiced, pernicious reading and corrupt conversation avoided, and are the Holy Scriptures often read in our families?

4th. Is care taken to avoid the use of spirituous liquors except for medicine, — the unnecessary frequenting of taverns and places of public resort; and to keep in true moderation and temperance, on the account of births, marriages, burials, and on other occasions?

5th. Are the poor provided for, and they assisted in such business as they are capable of? Are their necessities relieved? Do their children freely partake of learning to fit them for business? And are they and other Friends' children provided with homes among Friends?

6th. Are parents and heads of families, with the young and unmarried, careful that all proceedings with respect to marriage be conformable to our Discipline?

7th. Is a testimony faithfully maintained against a hireling ministry; against bearing arms, training, or other military matters; and against in any way defrauding the government of its just dues?

8th. Are Friends careful to inspect their affairs and settle their accounts, punctual to their promises and just in the payment of their debts, and to live within the bounds of their circumstances?

9th. Are records properly kept of marriages, births, deaths, and burials? Are there any Friends, removed from or come amongst you, without certificates?

10th. Whether care is taken regularly to deal with all offenders in the spirit of meekness and wisdom, without partiality or unnecessary delay. And is judgment placed where it appears necessary, in the authority of truth, according to our Discipline?

In the organization of each meeting for discipline, the first requisite is the appointment of a clerk, who is the most important officer. On all matters claiming the attention of the meeting which the members are moved to express themselves upon, it becomes his duty to obtain what appears the sense and judgment of the meeting, and to record it, making such minutes as rightly to embrace such judgment. This is done in the presence and subject to the inspection of all, and to the revision and correction of any who may feel that there is need of change or amendment, more properly to secure that desired end. All action is to be had in calmness and with proper deliberation, so that a subject shall be regarded in its

various aspects, and nothing decided without the needful consideration to reach a right result. No vote or count of members is ever taken, but all who may feel moved to express a judgment are at liberty to do so; and this is believed to be the most just and equitable mode of obtaining the true weight and judgment of a meeting, with an assurance that it is in accord with our Heavenly Father's will.

The Discipline (from which I propose to make some further extracts on a few important points, the better to illustrate its truly Christian basis) provides for the appointment, by each Monthly Meeting, of overseers, both men and women to have a care in each Preparative Meeting. They are to advise and assist any members who may stand in need of help, and in case disorderly or improper conduct is persisted in, to report the same, and if need be to make complaint against the offender to the Preparative or Monthly Meeting, for the settlement and adjustment of the difficulty. This is to be faithfully attended to, that good order, true love and concord, may be maintained amongst us as a peculiar people, called out of the world — away from the errors and corruptions of it.

And it has been experienced that in the meetings for discipline great comfort and satisfaction have been received and enjoyed when the members have attended them in awe, humility, and love, with no other view than the service of God and the help and assistance of one another. Thus the faithful members are divested of partiality and stiffness of opinion, and all high thoughts of themselves, and feel to be raised in them patience and condescension, according to the word of our blessed Lord, that "he that is greatest among you shall be your servant."

Meetings for worship are held both on first days and on a mid-week day ; and meetings for discipline are also preceded by one for worship. It is advised that all be careful to attend meetings for worship and discipline, at the times and hours appointed. An earnest exhortation was recorded in our yearly meeting about one hundred and fifty years ago, that all hold fast the profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, without wavering, both in respect to his outward coming in the flesh, his sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension, mediation and intercession at the right hand of the Father, and to the inward manifestation of his grace and Holy Spirit in our hearts, powerfully working in the soul of man, to the subduing of every evil affection and lust, and to the purifying of our consciences from dead works, to serve the living God ; that through the virtue and efficacy of this most holy faith ye may become strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

It has been the practice from early times that one or more faithful Friend or Friends, of either or both sexes, be appointed out of each particular meeting as standing elders by the Monthly Meeting, whose duty it is to help young ministers, and to give advice to all others as occasion may require ; to encourage our youth and others in virtue, and in a reverent and early attention to and belief in the divine appearance and operation of the Spirit of Christ in their own hearts, and in a venerable esteem of the Holy Scriptures and a frequent reading and meditating therein ; and to that plainness, moderation, and simplicity which is becoming our holy profession ; to stir up those who are or may be deficient in the due attendance of our meetings ; and in general to watch

over the flock of Christ, being themselves examples in faith, meekness, and charity.

The due approval and acknowledgment of ministers is also provided for, after the following manner, to wit: Where any Friend appears in public ministry whose conversation shall be clean and blameless, and the Preparative Meeting of ministers and elders within the limits of which the Friend belongs is convinced that the Lord hath called him or her to that weighty work, it is then to lay the same before the Quarterly Meeting of ministers and elders, for its consideration; and when said Quarterly Meeting shall have united therein, without any record being made of its judgment, the said Preparative Meeting may lay the same before the Monthly Meeting, which, after weightily feeling after the mind of truth therein, and being united in approving him or her as a minister in the church, the same shall be acknowledged and recorded as such.

Preparative, Quarterly and Yearly Meetings of ministers and elders, with queries to be answered in regard to their condition, are provided for, with representatives from the lower to the higher, who are to take the answers up; where they are to be read and recorded, and such advice and assistance afforded the lower meeting as occasion may require.

The queries for meetings of ministers and elders are touching the following matters:—

1st. As to the attendance of their meetings for worship and discipline, and bringing their families with them.

2d. Are ministers in the exercise of their gifts careful to wait for divine ability, and thereby preserved from being burdensome?

3d. Are the lives and conversation of ministers

and elders clean and blameless amongst men? Are they in unity one with another, and with the meeting they belong to, harmoniously laboring together for truth's honor?

4th. Do they rule their own houses well, bringing up their families in plainness which truth requires, in dress, language, and true moderation? Are they good examples in these respects themselves?

5th. Are they peacemakers in families and in the church, careful to maintain the Discipline not to screen their own families therefrom, and to administer justice as faithful servants?

Provisions of great importance are included in the Discipline in relation to marriage, which are intended and adapted to guard against improper or unequal connections therein. Parents are advised to exercise a religious care over their children,—that they be not anxious to obtain for them large portions or settlements, but that they be joined with persons of religious inclinations, suitable dispositions, and diligence in business, which are necessary to a comfortable life in a married state.

Parents are especially recommended to cultivate such habits of confidence with their children, as may render it easy to consult with them in such important concerns. Young and unmarried persons are all advised, previously to any procedure toward marriage, to seriously and humbly wait upon the Lord for his council and direction, and when favored with satisfactory clearness therein, to acquaint their parents or guardians with their intentions, and wait for their consent; so as to be preserved from the dangerous bias of forward or brittle and uncertain affections,

to their own great benefit and the comfort of their friends.

The intentions of the parties are to be made known to the Monthly Meeting through the Preparative Meeting, and they are to appear before both the men's and women's meetings and declare that "With Divine permission and Friends' approbation, they intend marriage with each other." The meeting is then to take means, by committees from that of each sex, to ascertain the clearness of the parties to proceed in marriage, and to see that the legal rights of any to be affected shall be secured. Reporting favorably, the parties, having consent of parents, are then to be allowed to accomplish their marriage in good order according to our rules. Two Friends of each sex are to be appointed to attend the meeting at which this is done (the usual week-day meeting to which the woman belongs), and to see that good order is observed, and a certificate prepared, signed by the parties, audibly read and properly witnessed, and that it be recorded. The overseers are to make report to the next Monthly Meeting. The mode of effecting the marriage is for the parties to appear at the meeting for worship named, and at a suitable time to rise, and, taking each other by the hand, declare that, "in the presence of that assembly, they take each other as husband and wife, promising through divine assistance to be affectionate and faithful to each other, as such, until death shall separate them."

The deliberate care and timely caution thus taken in this weighty concern, gives it a very proper and wholesome solemnity, truly fitted to its paramount importance.

How often have we known of cases around us, where the parties, governed by an improper and per-

haps sudden burst of passion and misplaced affection, hasten to some minister or magistrate, who for a paltry fee is glad to perform the ceremony which shall unite them for life, without knowing or pretending to inquire as to their fitness for each other, or having any authority at all in the matter, beyond that granted him by human laws; sometimes leaving the parties in after life to lament their rash and ill-advised course!

In regard to the ministry the Discipline contains the following:—

As we are fully persuaded that the ministry of the gospel is not received of man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ, according to that apostolic direction, — “As every man hath received the gift, *even* so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ.” (1 PET. iv. 10 and 11.) And as this ministry is divine, the motives and inducements hereto are perfectly disinterested, and in no way mercenary or lucrative, but concurrent with the precept that Christ gave to his Apostles and immediate followers: “Freely ye have received, freely give.” (MATT. x. 8.)

Friends have been careful to advise and instruct their members in regard to the proper management of their outward affairs,—that they do not launch into worldly business beyond what they can manage honorably and with good reputation; so that they should keep their words with all men, that their yea may prove yea indeed, and their nay, nay; for

whatsoever is otherwise cometh of evil. That the payment of just debts be not delayed beyond the time agreed upon; nor occasion given of complaint to those they deal with, by backwardness in payment, where no time is limited. It is earnestly desired that all Friends everywhere be very careful to avoid all inordinate pursuit after the things of this world, by such ways as depend too much upon the uncertain probabilities of hazardous enterprises; but rather labor to content themselves with such a plain way of living as is most agreeable to the self-denying principle of truth we profess, and which is most conducive to that tranquillity of mind that is requisite to a religious conduct through this troublesome world.

These, with other important advices and recommendations to Friends, are given in regard to the inspection of their affairs; and where there is occasion to suspect any are going backwards in their worldly estate in a manner that may be to the ill example of others or prejudice of creditors, Quarterly Meetings are advised to see that care may be taken that substantial Friends be appointed to visit every such family, and inquire and see how things are with them, and advise them in tenderness, according to our Discipline; and if they should not manifest a disposition to take such advice and comply with it, then to proceed against them as offenders. And all are advised, for their own good, to keep to such lawful and honest employments as they well understand, and are able to manage, for the necessary support of themselves and families.

All parents, heads of families, and guardians of minors are earnestly exhorted to prevent, as much as in them lies, their children and others under their

care from having or reading books or papers tending to prejudice the profession of the Christian religion, to create the least doubt concerning the authenticity of the Holy Scriptures or any of those saving truths declared in them, and that they discourage and suppress the reading of plays, pernicious novels, and other bad books ; but instead thereof, that they encourage the reading of the Holy Scriptures and other religious books.

Let the Holy Scriptures be early taught our youth, diligently searched and read by Friends, with due regard to the Holy Spirit, from whence they came and by which they are truly opened.

In regard to burials no particular mode is enjoined ; but the ancient practice of the Society is recommended, namely : The body, being placed in a plain coffin without any covering or furniture upon it, is usually taken to the meeting-house ; and if any there have a word of exhortation to the people gathered, an opportunity is afforded them, by a solemn silent waiting, after which the body is taken to the burying-ground, where they pause some time before it is put into the grave, that if any there should have anything upon them to exhort the people it may be delivered, and that the relatives may the more solemnly take their last leave of the remains of their departed kindred, and the spectators have a sense of mortality, by the occasion then given them to reflect upon their own latter end.

No monuments are to be set up in our burial grounds, and grave-stones are to be small and plain, with no other inscription than the name, date of death, and age of the deceased. All burial-grounds to be properly inclosed. Friends are advised against

imitating the vain custom of wearing or giving mourning, and all extravagant expenses about the interment of the dead.

Wholesome advice and instructions are contained in the Discipline on many other essential subjects.

Arbitrations are recommended, and a method specified for them, in cases of difference about property.

Certificates for such as remove, and for ministers who travel.

Charities. Covetousness is warned against.

Guarded conduct and conversation. The frequent and unnecessary conversation at the breaking up of our meetings is considered as a practice inconsistent with Christian gravity, and unbecoming the solemnity of the occasion.

Liberality to the poor.

Love and unity.

Membership. Against connecting ourselves with Freemasons.

Moderation and plainness.

Offenders, — how to be dealt with.

Records, — the proper keeping of them.

Spirituos liquors, against their use, except as medicine.

Trade, its just and proper management; and numerous other matters to which I need not refer.

The extracts I have made from the Discipline which has been adopted by Friends, as they believe through holy help, in their religious experience of more than two hundred years, will, I think, serve to show the solid basis of truth on which it is founded, and that they have not followed cunningly devised fables in living and acting under it, but have rather turned to that more sure word of prophecy, — ear-

nestly recommended to the primitive Christians by the Apostle Peter, — as follows : —

“ We have also a more sure word of prophecy ; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts : Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scriptures is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man : but holy men of God spake *as they were moved* by the Holy Ghost.” — 2 PET. i. 19-21.

Notwithstanding the excellence and purity of the principles and doctrines thus professed and upheld before the world, under the sore trials and persecutions of the early Friends, yet lamentable divisions and separations have occurred in a later day, when a condition of toleration and religious freedom has prevailed. The result of these divisions has been very sad ; causing the estrangement and alienation of those who had before been laborers together, as brethren in Christian unity and fellowship.

There has perhaps been no time, since the first gathering of Friends to be a peculiar people, when the Society at large has fallen so far below its ancient standard of truth as at the present. Broken and shattered by separations and divisions, it has seemed to be going out from the fruitful field into the wilderness, so that the whole land shall be desolate. But we may remember when this was the case with the Lord's chosen people of old, and He said, “ Shall I not visit for these things, shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this ? ” that He also said, “ Yet will I not make a full end with you. Fear ye not me ? saith the Lord : will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree that it cannot pass it :

and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet they cannot prevail ; though they roar, yet they cannot pass over it ? ” And further, “ If ye thoroughly amend your ways, and your doings, if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor ; . . . Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, forever and ever.” (Jeremiah iv. 26, v. 18, 22, and vii. 5-7.)

It is under these circumstances that I have felt impelled to state the reasons, and show the foregoing evidence in maintenance, of the primitive principles and practices of Friends ; more especially since the departure in New England has been so extensive, leaving but a comparatively very small number, who adhere to the ancient ways of the Society, but much the larger portion have embraced those more in accordance with the formal professors of the day. We know that there are those who are connected with the backsliders that mourn over this state of things, who long for “ *the good old times*,” the restoration of the ancient paths, and desire again to walk in them. An interview quite recently held with some of this class has convinced me that this is the case to a considerable extent, and that these good old ways, though strayed away from by so many, have in numerous instances lost none of their beauty or value in their eyes ; but that in not a few cases they have been overborne by influences to which they have yielded through weakness, and which they would be glad to feel themselves strengthened to overcome.

May we not then hope that there may yet be a re-gathering of the people to the ancient standard of truth, and that if such should occur our holy Leader will regard it with favor and crown it with success ?

But should it be otherwise, let us not be discouraged or disheartened, but continue to rely upon the promise of our blessed Saviour, — “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

I may now say, before concluding this plea which I have felt it right to make in support of the pure Christian principles of the Society of Friends, that I commenced it in the summer of 1884, and have labored upon it since, at intervals, when my health would permit, until now, in the early part of 1885, it seems to be brought to a satisfactory conclusion, and that I feel to express my sincere and heartfelt gratitude to my heavenly Leader and Guide, who has deigned to be with me, and sensibly to aid me at times, in this laborious and responsible task. I have indeed sometimes felt depressed in the course of the work, with an apprehension that this ground was too holy for me to stand upon ; yet I have been strengthened and encouraged at other seasons to work on, with some sense of a renewal of help, until the end is reached.

I have made no attempt to treat of the subjects of Justification, Sanctification, or Perfection, feeling it to be better to leave these topics without comment, where they ever have been, and ever will be, wisely and rightly administered by the Infinite Father of all. My bodily health has been so poor, and the increasing infirmities of age so great, that my stay in this life cannot be expected much longer to continue ; yet I have been favored to rely upon the Father of all for a comfortable assurance that I should have his help until its completion. And now, hoping it may be of some service in the good purpose intended, I feel easy to leave it with my dear family and friends.

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